



Existing Conditions Report Key Findings Summary, Part 1

The Existing Conditions, Opportunities, and Challenges Report (ECR) represents the first major technical step in the process of updating the City of Fairfield's General Plan. The ECR provides comprehensive information on existing conditions in Fairfield across all topic areas covered in the General Plan, and it also provides an analysis of opportunities. The focus of the ECR is on resources, trends, and concerns that will frame choices for the long-term development of Fairfield. The ECR is divided into 13 chapters (one of which provides the introduction) as well as a separate Market Analysis. Each chapter includes a list of Key Findings and Planning Considerations. Below is a summarized version of the Key Findings for six of the twelve ECR content chapters.

LAND USE

1. **The future of growth in Fairfield will be influenced by the Urban Limit Line boundary and annexations to the City.**

The Urban Limit Line (ULL) establishes the City's ultimate boundary for urban development. Additionally, the City has annexed (or added and incorporated into the city boundary) many areas over the years. Annexed areas of the city require city services, like water and sewer. The General Plan update must consider potential changes to the ULL or City annexations and how changes will direct growth around Fairfield's edges as opposed to its existing neighborhoods.

2. **The existing land use pattern is primarily suburban and car-oriented.**

Fairfield is a primarily car-dependent city due to policies that have, over time, encouraged patterns such as:

- Wide commercial corridors lined with auto-oriented uses like auto body shops;
- Mostly single-family residential neighborhoods; and
- Highway-serving commercial centers with large parking lots.

The General Plan update provides an opportunity to promote mixed-use and infill development, or development that occurs in existing neighborhoods on vacant or underutilized parcels, particularly along the Texas corridors. Such policies can encourage a less car-oriented future by promoting neighborhoods where goods, services, and activities are within walking distance.

3. **There are several County and City land use plans that are pertinent to the Planning Area. The information in these plans should align the General Plan update.**



The Train Station Specific Plan and the Heart of Fairfield Plan have provided a strong foundation for future land use planning across the city that promotes a mix of land uses close to a variety of transportation options, known as “transit-oriented” development. The General Plan update should build off these plans provide updated information and goals for the plans if needed. Additionally, the General Plan will also need to be consistent with Solano County’s vision for surrounding lands beyond the city as well as the long-term operation of Travis Air Force Base.

4. Commercial and industrial land uses should be responsive to future economic changes.

As work continues to change after the COVID-19 pandemic, the General Plan must be responsive to economic trends by promoting more mixed-use, flexible uses in commercial and industrial areas, including rethinking the mall at Solano Town Center.

5. Preservation of agriculture and open space lands is important for economic, sustainability, and recreation reasons.

Infill development can help to preserve key resources such as agricultural lands in Green Valley and Suisun Valley, open space in the Vaca Mountains and Suisun Marsh, and recreational lands like Rockville Hills Regional Park.

6. There are several opportunity area clusters (areas with vacant or underutilized land) that could be developed or redeveloped to meet commercial, industrial, or residential needs.

Many of Fairfield’s vacant parcels are found in or near the Train Station Specific Plan Area. Underutilized sites in the city, meaning those that are not currently being used to their highest potential and may present opportunities for redevelopment, are primarily located along the North Texas Street corridor, at the Solano Town Center Mall, at car-oriented uses adjacent to I-80, and in industrial areas. The General Plan will evaluate tradeoffs of expanding development in certain areas just outside of city limits that are currently vacant versus encouraging development of underutilized parcels.

7. Current land use patterns create relatively separate neighborhoods across the city. The General Plan update presents an opportunity to connect and unify Fairfield.

Currently, Fairfield is made up of three areas: Cordelia, Central Fairfield, and Northeast Fairfield. The City may be able to develop land use patterns that encourage better connections between neighborhoods and help to develop a unified City identity.

GEOLOGY & SOILS

1. Fairfield must balance protection of farmland with new development areas.

As the General Plan Update considers new growth areas to meet housing and economic needs, it will also need to balance protection of valuable agricultural lands around Fairfield from development pressures within the region.



2. Fairfield must account for risks from earthquakes in new development and land use designations.

The San Andreas Fault System is an active regional fault that could cause large earthquake. Land use designations in the General Plan should consider risks from earthquakes, especially in areas that are vulnerable to landslides, liquefaction (which can make solid soils ripple like fluids) and along active fault lines, including the hilly areas around the Planning Area, areas near the Suisun Marsh, and the Cordelia neighborhood.

3. Landslides pose a threat to safety.

Areas containing weaker soils are vulnerable to landslides. The General Plan Update provides an opportunity to highlight areas within landslide hazard zones and provide policy direction for future development.

BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES

1. Consideration of the Solano Habitat Conservation Plan (HCP) Conservation Areas.

Several planned development areas within undeveloped portions of the Planning Area, including in the Train Station Specific Plan Area; between Suisun Marsh and I-80; and north of Cordelia, east of Green Valley Road; are located within conservation areas, which are areas that are home to important species and natural communities. It is recommended the General Plan Update include appropriate policies in the Open Space/Conservation Element to address Solano HCP Conservation Strategy goals and objectives.

HYDROLOGY

2. Address floodplain management.

Hilly uplands areas of the City are attractive for development may face less direct flood risks, but the General Plan must balance this with prevention of changes to the hydrology system (e.g., the earth's water system) and wildfire risks. While the City has some regulated floodplains, most existing housing stock is not vulnerable to flooding. The General Plan must consider how to keep new development safe from flooding while avoiding changes to the natural flow of water in the future.

3. Address surface water quality issues.

Surface water quality (or level of pollutants in streams and other water bodies) within the City is generally good, although a few of the streams flowing through Fairfield and all downstream waters have experienced degradation in the past and/or have continuing water quality problems. To protect downstream waters like the sloughs and marsh channels, stormwater and runoff must be monitored and treated. However, there are few areas that are the right size and location for such treatment in the city.

4. Planning for sea level rise.



Portions of the city, including the southern margin of the City toward Link and Cordelia roads, and along the Suisun Marsh, may be affected by sea level rise over the next 50 years. This can affect local drainage networks and potentially increase the frequency and depth of flooding.

PUBLIC FACILITIES

- 1. Fairfield is short of meeting its park service acreage goals, and some portions of the city lack park access.**

A park service acreage ratio is used to ensure that all Fairfield residents have enough space/park acreage to enjoy parks and recreation. The City is currently prioritizing improvements at many of its existing parks, such as at Allan Witt Park or the Linear Park Trail. As more infill development occurs and adds more people, planning for smaller parks can increase open space access and walkability in areas that otherwise have little park access. Locations and types of parks will need to be planned for this growing infill population. Impact fees may pay for new parks in some areas, a challenge will be finding stable revenue to maintain and upkeep parks.

- 2. Parks, recreational facilities, and community facilities should reflect the needs of a growing and changing population.**

The City should continually assess whether existing parks, recreational facilities, and community facilities suit people's needs and priorities over time. For example, an aging population would indicate a need for accessible facilities and programming that appeals to seniors. Increasing numbers of young families may need more childcare facilities, and youth might want additional programs or facilities. In light of COVID, park design might need to consider more active recreation needs, such as walking, biking, jogging, and play. Programming should reflect Fairfield's diversity and be engaging to youth from a variety of cultural backgrounds.

- 3. The Linear Park is an asset for Fairfield, but remains underutilized.**

Fairfield's Linear Park Trail provides a bicycle and pedestrian connection between the Cordelia neighborhood and Central Fairfield, two distinct areas of town that are not well-connected. The Linear Park trail is not well-used because of safety concerns, and it is unfinished in the northeast portion of the city. The City will need to determine priorities for the future of the Linear Park Trail to improve this city connection and open space resource.

- 4. Several schools are at or close to their enrollment capacity.**

In the Cordelia neighborhood, FSUSD schools are seeing increasing enrollment numbers. In the future, schools within the Planning Area must have enough space to accommodate Fairfield's projected population growth. The City of Fairfield must maintain a close working relationship with the FSUSD and TUSD to monitor student demographic trends.



5. **New growth in Fairfield must be coordinated with Fire and Police departments to ensure adequate coverage.**

Both FPD and FFD are short of meeting their service standards as designated in the existing General Plan. The Cordelia area in particular is not adequately served by fire services. As development continues in previously undeveloped areas of Fairfield, the City will need to coordinate closely with FPD and FFD to make sure departments can meet updated safety standards.

WET UTILITIES

1. **Address Potable Water Supply Issues.**

There are three primary factors that can impact the City's potable water (drinking water) supply as summarized below.

- **Climatic:** Some water sources are more affected by weather patterns than others. The Solano Water Project refers to the system of dams and reservoirs primarily in Solano County. The Solano Project should be less impacted by climactic changes than the California State Water Project because the Solano Project is not dependent upon mountain snowpack for supply.
- **Environmental/Legal:** State Water Project water, one of Fairfield's water supplies, is conveyed through the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta, which is an important habitat for wildlife, including some endangered species. Protection of these species involves periodic pumping restrictions, which affects its water exports. The City has a legal entitlement to use water from Lake Berryessa through the Solano Project, as well as additional agreements with Solano Irrigation District to purchase additional water. Full availability of the water supply from the Solano Project requires that four existing agreements with Solano Irrigation District remain active.
- **Water Quality/Treatment:** State Water Project water is required to meet certain water quality objectives for the Delta, which may restrict its exports. In addition, the quality of source water for State Water Project can provide a treatment challenge during winter storms. At a specified low level of contamination, the City will either blend State Water Project source water with its Solano Project water source or it will pause usage of State Water Project source water until the water quality improves.

2. **Potential for increased sewer collection system and WWTP (Wastewater Treatment Plant) capacity needs.**

Sewer flows are affected by increases in population, changes in land use, and new development. New development on Travis AFB (where the City does not have jurisdiction) could potentially increase sewer flows.



The Fairfield-Suisun Sewer District Wastewater Collection System Master Plan Update (2020) identified capacity deficiencies in the existing trunk sewer system and explored alternative solutions including upsizing pipes, construction of parallel pipes, flow diversions, and adding or replacing pumps. Based on the model results, about \$15.3 million of recommended improvements were identified.

3. **Addressing localized flooding.**

Thanks to various flood protection projects, several areas along creeks that have flooded in the past have been removed from Flood Hazard Area maps. However, some flooding still occurs in certain areas of the city. The General Plan will assess whether additional stormwater drainage improvements, policies or regulations will need to be developed or modified to address this issue.